

**U.S. National Statement
Agenda Item 3 General Debate
ONDCP Director Rahul Gupta
Monday, March 13, 2023**

Good afternoon,

The United States is pleased to participate in the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which brings us together to make progress for all nations.

Today, the world is in a place we have never been.

Between the use of illicit fentanyl in the United States, tramadol in Africa, captagon in the Middle East and Europe, nitazenes in Europe and North America, and methamphetamine and synthetic cannabinoids in nearly every region.

The proliferation of illicit synthetic drugs has created a global, shared problem that poses an urgent threat to the health and safety of all Member States.

Criminals can produce synthetics anywhere, using chemicals and manufacturing equipment that are often unregulated and commercially available.

These drugs can be extremely lethal and easily trafficked, and accessing them can be as simple as opening a social media app.

They are responsible for unprecedented levels of overdose deaths and poisonings around the globe as well as violence related to the illicit drug trade, and they strain public health and law enforcement officials working to respond to and prevent overdoses, treat addiction, keep communities safe, and disrupt trafficking.

They are tearing families and communities apart, and the effects are felt locally, nationally, and globally.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine is also exacerbating public health challenges.

Because of Russia's invasion, the people of Ukraine continue to lack access to needed medicines for pain and palliative care, important drug prevention services are interrupted, and those who use drugs are unable to access treatment.

We call on Russia to end its war of aggression immediately.

As Member States and global partners, addressing the growing threat of synthetic drugs is our common and shared responsibility.

The United States is undertaking a comprehensive approach to our domestic drug problem.

Our Strategy focuses on addressing two drivers of this epidemic: untreated addiction and the drug trafficking profits that fuel it.

We have taken unprecedented and historic steps to expand access to evidence-based treatment, harm reduction, prevention, and recovery support services to millions of Americans.

We are also disrupting the commercial operations of drug trafficking organizations, and denying them billions of dollars in profits and operating capital that they would use to further poison our people and destabilize Member States.

At the international level, we have advocated for scheduling several fentanyl analogues and precursors, and we thank the CND Member States for supporting these actions.

We also welcome the CND's adoption of the U.S.-sponsored resolution to improve our collective ability to identify substances of concern earlier, take scheduling actions where appropriate, and enhance the implementation of scheduling decisions.

The United States believes that when we all work together, we can accomplish any goal.

We seek to strengthen our international cooperation under the framework of the conventions.

We need a global coalition of countries dedicated to driving solutions to this new threat.

We seek robust cooperation across the supply chain of synthetic drugs, from working against the criminal diversion of precursor chemicals, to collaborating against major drug producing cartels, as well as sharing best practices with countries who are strengthening their public health responses.

Illicit synthetic drugs are the most pressing drug threat to our collective health, well-being, and security.

Together, we can lead the response.

Together, we can disrupt illicit synthetic drug production, trafficking, and use.

And together, we can save countless lives.

We call on all Member States committed to justice, peace, and health to join us in this effort.

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